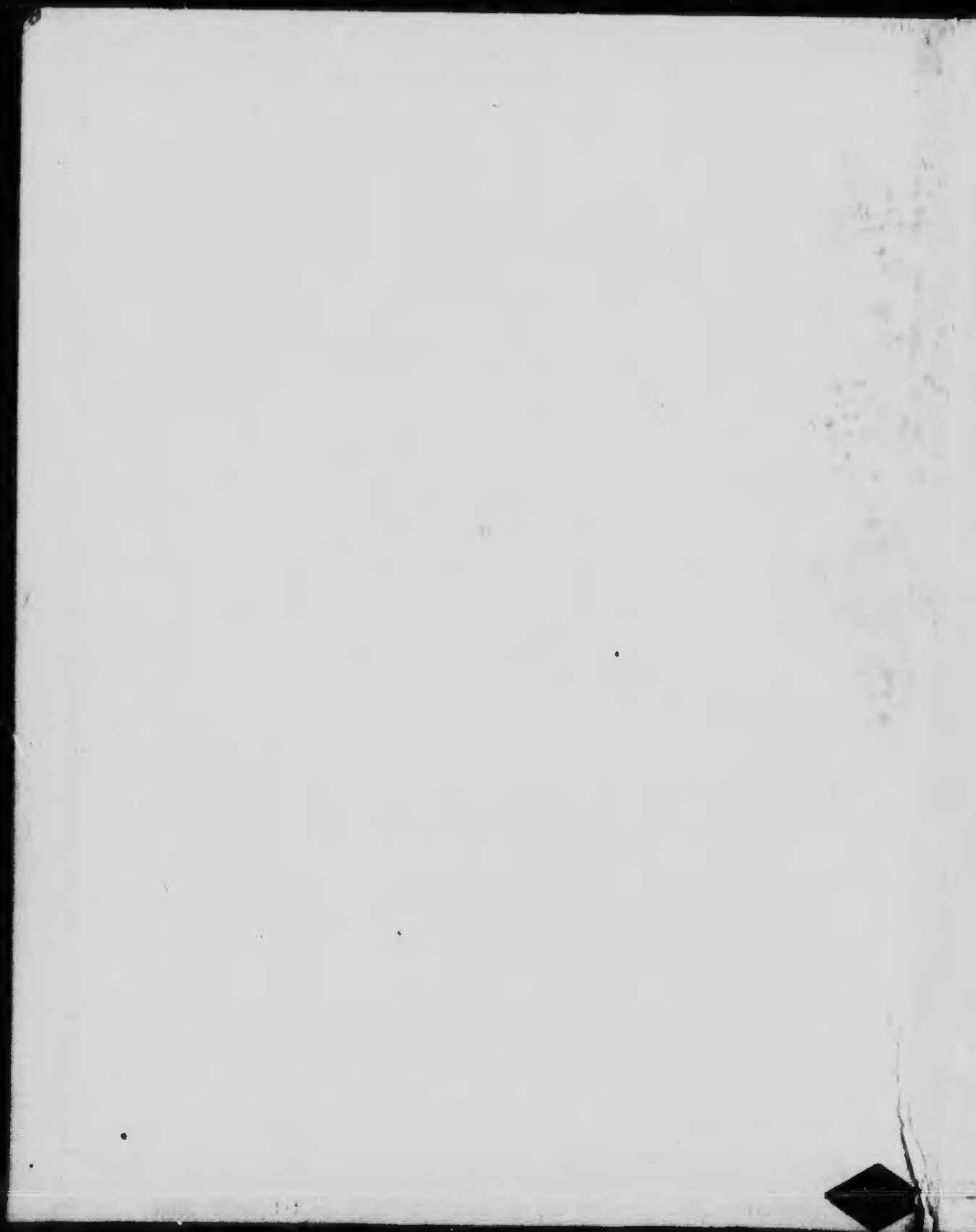


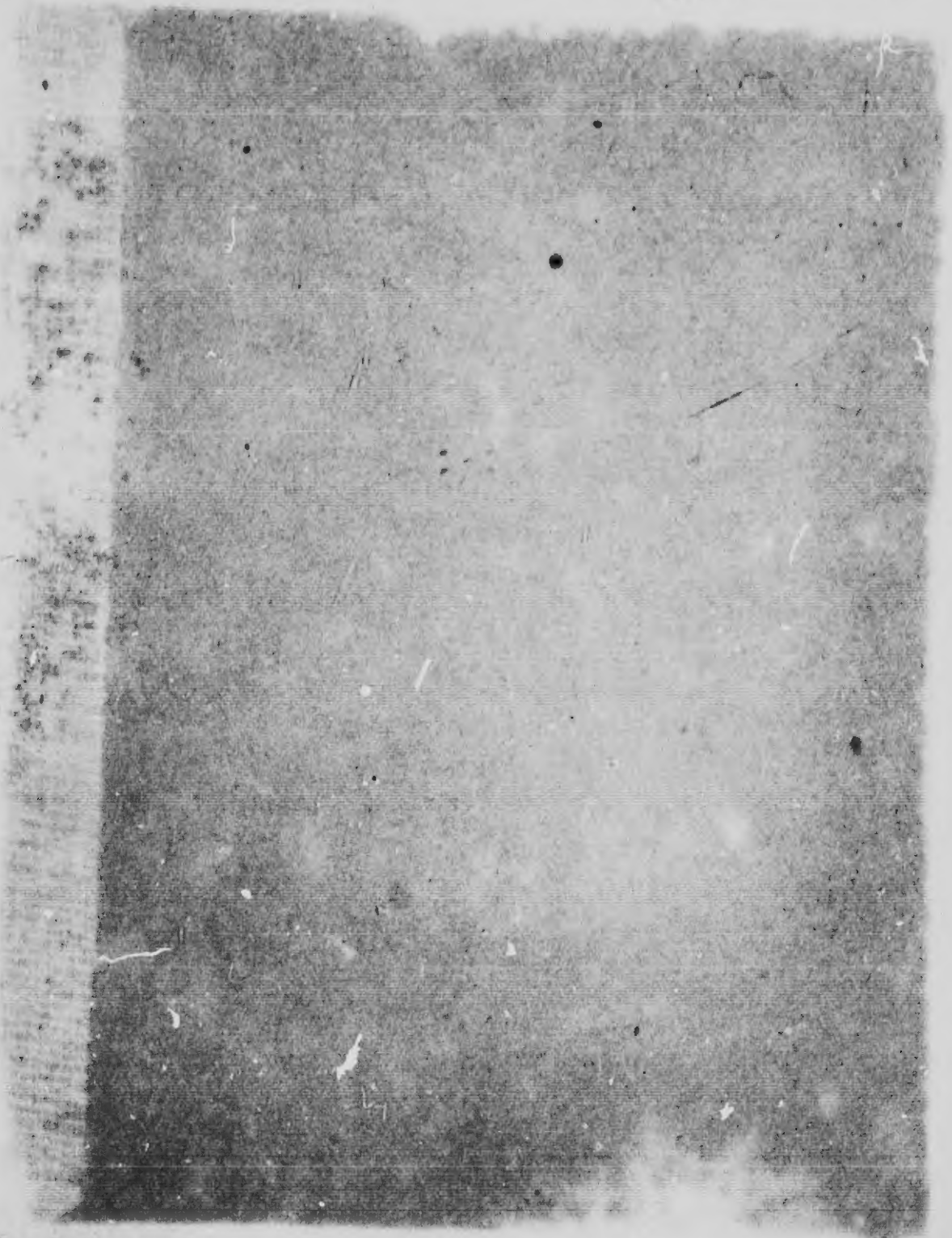
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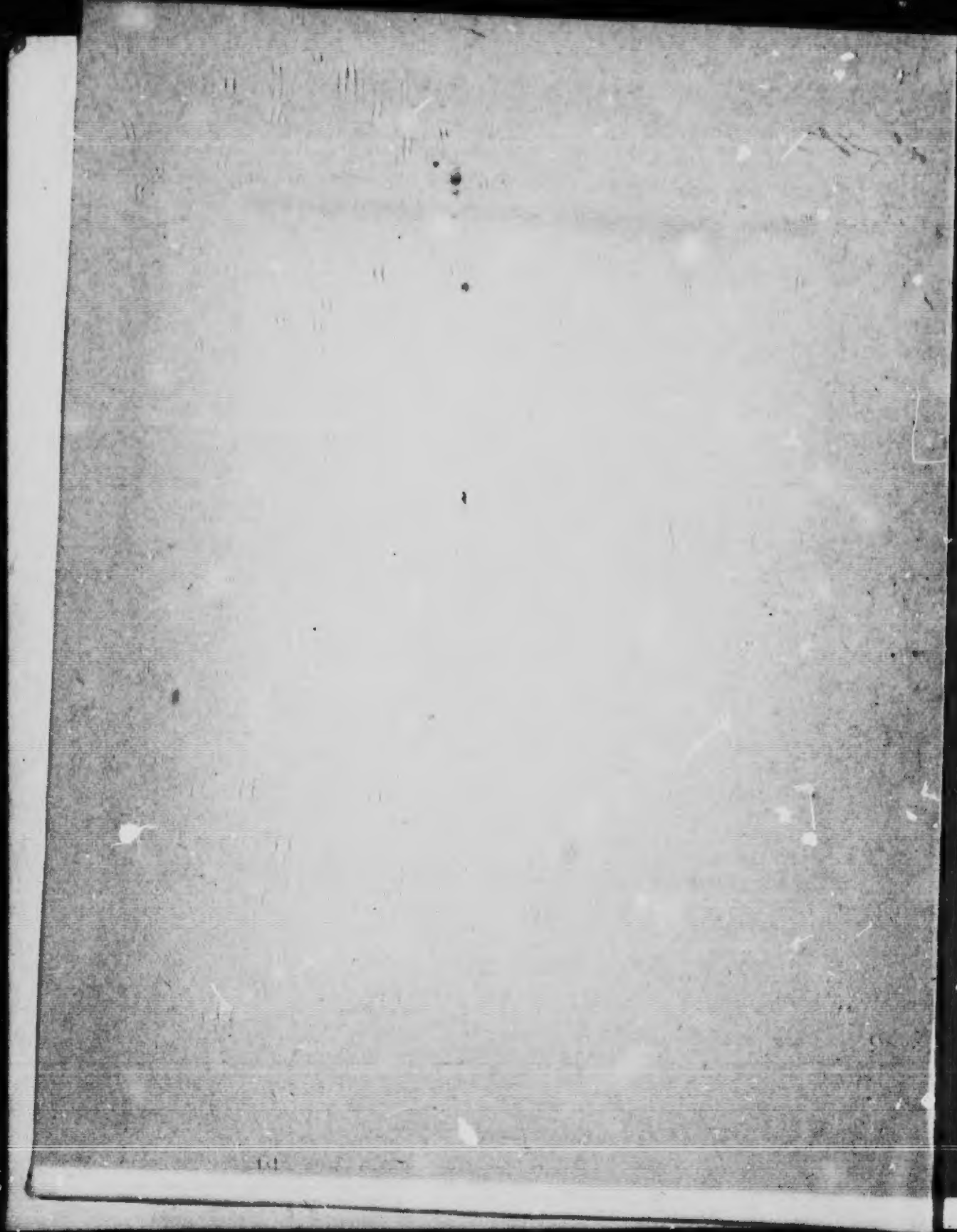


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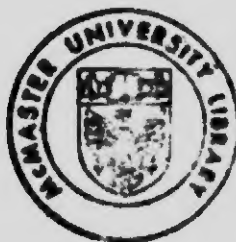








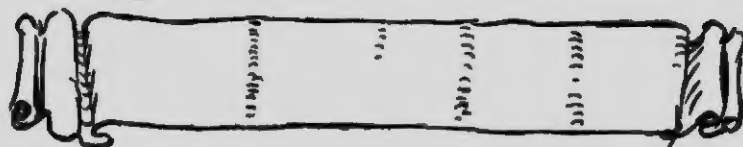
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THE HENPECKED MAN BY SIR
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BY A
BACHELOR





*"Believe me, man, there is no greater blisse
Than is the quiet joy of loving wife;
Which whoso wants, halfe of himselfe doth misse;
Friend without change, play-fellow without strife,
Food without fulness, counsaile without pride,
Is this sweet doubling of our single life."*

SIR P. SIDNEY.

THERE is so much talk about matrimony going on round me, in consequence of the approaching event for which we are assembled at the Hall,

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that I confess I find my thoughts singularly exercised on the subject. Indeed, all the bachelors of the establishment seem to be passing through a kind of fiery ordeal: for Lady Lillycraft is one of those tender, romance-read dames of the old school whose mind is filled with flames and darts, and who breathe nothing but constancy and wedlock. She is for ever immersed in the concerns of the heart, and, to use a poetical phrase, is perfectly surrounded by "the purple light of love." The very general seems to feel the influence of this sentimental atmosphere; to melt as he approaches her ladyship, and for the time to forget all his heresies about matrimony and the sex.

The good lady is generally surrounded by little documents of her prevalent taste; novels of a tender nature; richly bound little books of poetry, that are filled with sonnets and love-tales, and perfumed with rose-leaves; and she has always an album at hand, for which

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she claims the contributions of all her friends. On looking over this last repository the other day, I found a series of poetical extracts, in



the squire's handwriting, which might have been intended as matrimonial hints to his ward. I was so much struck with several of them that I took the liberty of copying them out. They are from the old play of Thomas Davenport, published in 1661, entitled "The City Night-Cap"; in which is drawn out and

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exemplified, in the part of Abstemia, the character of a patient and faithful wife, which, I think, might vie with that of the renowned Griselda.

I have often thought it a pity that plays and novels should always end at the wedding, and should not give us another act, and another volume, to let us know how the hero and heroine conducted themselves when married. Their main object seems to be merely to instruct young ladies how to get husbands, but not how to keep them: now this last—I speak it with all due diffidence—appears to me to be a desideratum in modern married life. It is appalling to those who have not yet adventured into the holy state to see how soon the flame of romantic love burns out, or rather is quenched, in matrimony; and how deplorably the passionate, poetic lover declines into the phlegmatic, prosaic husband. I am inclined to attribute this very much to the defect just mentioned in the plays and novels, which

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form so important a branch of study of our young ladies, and which teach them how to be heroines, but leave them totally at a loss when they come to be wives. The play from which the quotations before me were made, however, is an exception to this remark ; and I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of adducing some of them for the benefit of the reader, and for the honour of an old writer, who has bravely attempted to awaken dramatic interest in favour of a woman even after she was married !

The following is a commendation of Abstemia to her husband Lorenzo :

“ She’s modest, but not sullen, and loves silence ;
Not that she wants apt words (for when she speaks
She inflames love with wonder), but because
She calls wise silence the soul’s harmony.
She’s truly chaste ; yet such a foe to coyness,
The poorest call her courteous ; and, which is excellent
(Though fair and young), she shuns to expose herself
To the opinion of strange eyes. She either seldom
Or never walks abroad but in your company ;

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And then with such sweet bashfulness, as if
She were venturing on cracked ice, and takes delight
To step into the print your foot hath made,
And will follow you whole fields ; so she will drive
Tedium out of time with her sweet character."

Notwithstanding all this excellence, Abstemia has the misfortune to incur the unmerited jealousy of her husband. Instead, however, of resenting his harsh treatment with clamorous upbraidings, and with the stormy violence of high, windy virtue, by which the sparks of anger are so often blown into a flame, she endures it with the meekness of conscious but patient virtue, and makes the following beautiful appeal to a friend who has witnessed her long-suffering :

"Hast thou not seen me
Bear all his injuries, as the ocean suffers
The angry bark to plough through her bosom,
And yet is presently so smooth, the eye
Cannot perceive where the wide wound was made ?"

Lorenzo, being wrought on by false representations, at length repudiates her. To the

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last, however, she maintains her patient sweetness, and her love for him, in spite of his cruelty. She deplores his error even more than his



unkindness, and laments the delusion which has turned his very affection into a source of bitterness. There is a moving pathos in her parting address to Lorenzo after their divorce :

“ Farewell, Lorenzo,
Whom my soul doth love : if you e’er marry,
May you meet a good wife—so good that you

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May not suspect her, nor may she be worthy
Of your suspicion : and if you hear hereafter
That I am dead, inquire but my last words,
And you shall know that to the last I loved you.
And when you walk forth with your second choice
Into the pleasant fields, and by chance talk of me,
Imagine that you see me, lean and pale,
Strewing your path with flowers . . .
But may she never live to pay my debts : *[weeps]*
If but in thought she wrong you, may she die
In the conception of the injury
Pray make me wealthy with one kiss : farewell, sir ;
Let it not grieve you when you shall remember
That I was innocent,—nor this forget,
Though innocence here suffer, sigh and groan,
She walks but thorow thorns to find a throne.”

In a short time Lorenzo discovers his error and the innocence of his injured wife. In the transports of his repentance he calls to mind all her feminine excellence—her gentle, uncomplaining, womanly fortitude under wrongs and sorrows :

“ O Abstemia,
How lovely thou lookest now ! now thou appearest
Chaster than is the morning’s modesty,
That rises with a blush, over whose bosom

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The western wind creeps softly ; now I remember
How, when she sat at table, her obedient eye
Would dwell on mine, as if it were not well
Unless it looked where I looked : oh how proud
She was when she could cross herself to please me !
But where now is this fair soul ? Like a silver cloud
She hath wept herself, I fear, into the dead sea,
And will be found no more."

It is but doing right by the reader, if interested in the fate of Abstemia by the preceding extracts, to say that she was restored to the arms and affections of her husband, rendered fonder than ever, by that disposition in every good heart, to atone for past injustice by an overflowing measure of returning kindness.

"Thou wealth worth more than kingdoms ! I am now
Confirmed past all suspicion ; thou art far
Sweeter in thy sincere truth than a sacrifice
Decked up for death with garlands. The Indian winds
That blow from off the coast, and cheer the sailor
With the sweet savour of their spices, want
The delight flows in thee."

I have been more affected and interested
by this little dramatic picture than by many

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a popular love-tale ; though, as I said before, I do not think it likely either Abstemia or patient Grizzle stands much chance of being taken for a model. Still I like to see poetry now and then extending its views beyond the wedding-day, and teaching a lady how to make herself attractive even after marriage. There is no great need of enforcing on an unmarried lady the necessity of being agreeable ; nor is there any great art requisite in a youthful beauty to enable her to please. Nature has multiplied attractions round her. Youth is in itself attractive. The freshness of budding beauty needs no foreign aid to set it off ; it pleases merely because it is fresh, and budding, and beautiful. But it is for the married state that a woman needs the most instruction, and in which she should be most on her guard to maintain her powers of pleasing. No woman can expect to be to her husband all that he fancied her when he was a lover. Men are always doomed to be duped, not so much by

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the arts of the sex as by their own imaginations. They are always wooing goddesses, and marrying mere mortals. A woman should therefore



ascertain what was the charm that rendered her so fascinating when a girl, and endeavour to keep it up when she has become a wife. One great thing undoubtedly was the chariness of herself and her conduct which an unmarried

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female always observes. She should maintain the same niceness and preserve in her person and habits, and endeavour still to preserve a freshness and virgin delicacy in the eye of her husband. She should remember that the province of the woman is to be wooed, not to woo ; to be caressed, not to caress. Man is an ungrateful being in love ; bounty loses instead of winning him. The secret of a woman's power does not consist so much in giving as in withholding. A woman may give up too much even to her husband. It is to a thousand little delicacies of conduct that she must trust to keep alive passion, and to protect herself from that dangerous familiarity, that thorough acquaintance with every weakness and imperfection, incident to matrimony. By these means she may still maintain her power though she has surrendered her person, and may continue the romance of love even beyond the honeymoon.

“She that hath a wise husband,” says

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Jeremy Taylor, " must entice him to an eternal dearness by the veil of modesty and the grave robes of chastity, the ornament of meeknesse and the jewels of faith and charity. She must have no painting but blushings; her brightness must be purity, and she must shine round about with sweetnesses and friendship; and she shall be pleasant while she lives and desired when she dies."

I have wandered into a rambling series of remarks on a trite subject, and a dangerous one for a bachelor to meddle with. That I may not, however, appear to confine my observations entirely to the wife, I will conclude with another quotation from Jeremy Taylor, in which the duties of both parties are mentioned; while I would recommend his sermon on the marriage-ring to all those who, wiser than myself, are about entering the happy state of wedlock.

" There is scarce any matter of duty but it concerns them both alike, and is only distin-

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guished by names, and hath its variety by circumstances and little accidents : and what in one is called love, in the other is called reverence ; and what in the wife is obedience, the same in the man is duty. He provides, and she dispenses ; he gives commandments, and she rules by them ; he rules her by authority, and she rules him by love ; she ought by all means to please him, and he must by no means displease her."



THE HEN-PICKED MAN





"Parvula, pumilio, χαῖρον μὲν, tota merum sal."

LUCR. iv. 1155.

"A little pretty, witty, charming she!"

THERE are in the following letter matters, which I, a bachelor, cannot be supposed to be acquainted with: therefore shall not pretend to explain upon it till farther consideration, but leave the author of the epistle to express his condition his own way.

"MR. SPECTATOR,

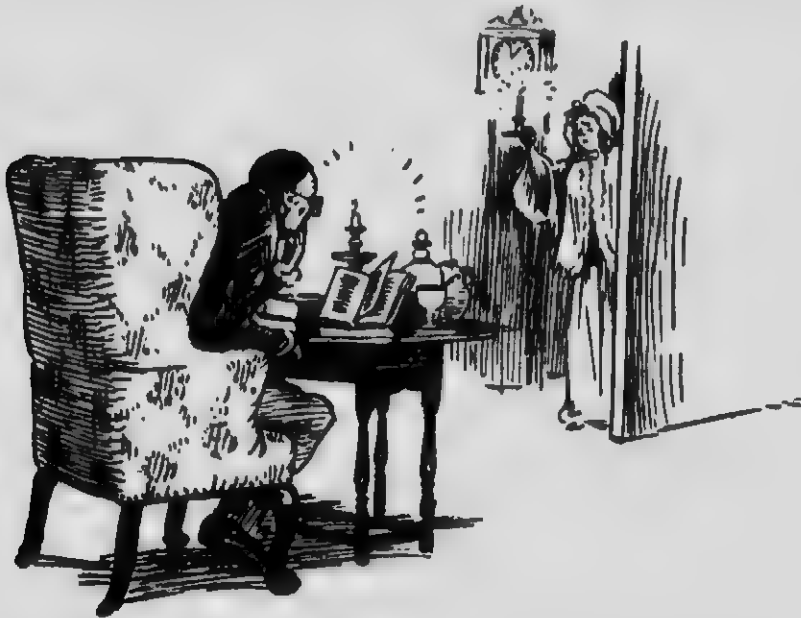
"I do not deny but you appear in many of your papers to understand human life pretty well; but there are very many things which you cannot possibly have a true

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notion of in a single life ; these are such as respect the married state ; otherwise I cannot account for your having overlooked a very good sort of people, which are commonly called in scorn 'the Hen-pecked.' You are to understand that I am one of those innocent mortals who suffer derision under that word, for being governed by the best of wives. It would be worth your consideration to enter into the nature of affection itself, and tell us, according to your philosophy, why it is that our dears shall do what they will with us, shall be froward, ill-natured, assuming, sometimes whine, at others rail, then swoon away, then come to life, have the use of speech to the greatest fluency imaginable, and then sink away again, and all because they fear we do not love them enough ; that is, the poor things love us so heartily, that they cannot think it possible we should be able to love them in so great a degree, which makes them take on so. I say, Sir, a true good-natured

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man, whom rakes and libertines call hen-pecked, shall fall into all these different moods with his dear life, and at the same time see



they are wholly put on ; and yet not be hard-hearted enough to tell the dear good creature that she is a hypocrite.

“This sort of good man is very frequent in the populous and wealthy city of London,

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and is the true hen-pecked man. The kind creature cannot break through his kindnesses so far as to come to an explanation with the tender soul, and therefore goes on to comfort her when nothing ails her, to appease her when she is not angry, and to give her his cash when he knows she does not want it; rather than be uneasy for a whole month, which is computed by hard-hearted men the space of time which a froward woman takes to come to herself, if you have courage to stand out.

"There are indeed several other species of the hen-pecked, and in my opinion they are certainly the best subjects the queen has; and for that reason I take it to be your duty to keep us above contempt.

"I do not know whether I make myself understood in the representation of a hen-pecked life, but I shall take leave to give you an account of myself, and my own spouse. You are to know that I am reckoned no fool, have





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on several occasions been tried whether I will take ill-usage, and the event has been to my advantage; and yet there is not such a slave in Turkey as I am to my dear. She has a good share of wit, and is what you call a very pretty agreeable woman. I perfectly doat on her, and my affection to her gives me all the anxieties imaginable but that of jealousy. My being thus confident of her, I take, as much as I can judge of my heart, to be the reason that whatever she does, though it be never so much against my inclination, there is still left something in her manner that is amiable. She will sometimes look at me with an assumed grandeur, and pretend to resent that I have not had respect enough for her opinion in such an instance in company. I cannot but smile at the pretty anger she is in, and then she pretends she is used like a child. In a word, our great debate is, which has the superiority in point of understanding. She is eternally forming an argument of debate;

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to which I very indolently answer, 'Thou art mighty pretty.' To this she answers, 'All the world but you think I have as much sense as yourself.' I repeat to her, 'Indeed you are pretty.' Upon this there is no patience, she will throw down any thing about her, stamp and pull off her head clothes. 'Fye, my dear,' say I; 'how can a woman of your sense fall into such an intemperate rage?' This is an argument that never fails. 'Indeed, my dear,' says she, 'you make me mad sometimes, so you do, with the silly way you have of treating me like a pretty idiot.' Well, what have I got by putting her into good humour? Nothing, but that I must convince her of my good opinion by my practice; and then I am to give her possession of my little ready money, and, for a day and a half following, dislike all she dislikes, and extol everything she approves. I am so exquisitely fond of this darling, that I seldom see any of my friends, am uneasy in all companies

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till I see her again ; and when I come home she is in the dumps, because she says she is sure I came so soon only because I think her handsome. I dare not upon this occasion laugh ; but though I am one of the warmest churchmen in the kingdom, I am forced to rail at the times because she is a violent Whig. Upon this we talk politics so long, that she is convinced I kiss her for her wisdom. It is a common practice with me to ask her some question concerning the constitution, which she answers me in general out of Harrington's Oceana. Then I commend her strange memory, and her arm is immediately locked in mine. While I keep her in this temper she plays before me, sometimes dancing in the midst of the room, sometimes striking an air at her spinnet, varying her posture and her charms in such a manner that I am in continual pleasure. She will play the fool if I allow her to be wise ; but if she suspects I like her for her trifling, she immediately grows grave.

THE HEN-PECKED MAN

“These are the toils in which I am taken, and I carry off my servitude as well as most men; but my application to you is in behalf of the hen-pecked in general; and I desire a dissertation from you in defence of us. You have, as I am informed, very good authorities in our favour, and hope you will not omit the mention of the renowned Socrates, and his philosophic resignation to his wife Xantippe. This would be a very good office to the world in general; for the hen-pecked are powerful in their quality and numbers, not only in cities, but in courts: in the latter they are ever the most obsequious; in the former, the most wealthy of all men. When you have considered wedlock thoroughly, you ought to enter into the suburbs of matrimony, and give us an account of the thralldom of kind keepers and irresolute lovers; the keepers who cannot quit their fair ones, though they see their approaching ruin; the lovers, who dare not marry, though they know they

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shall never be happy without the mistresses
whom they cannot purchase on other terms.



“What will be a great embellishment to
your discourse will be, that you may find

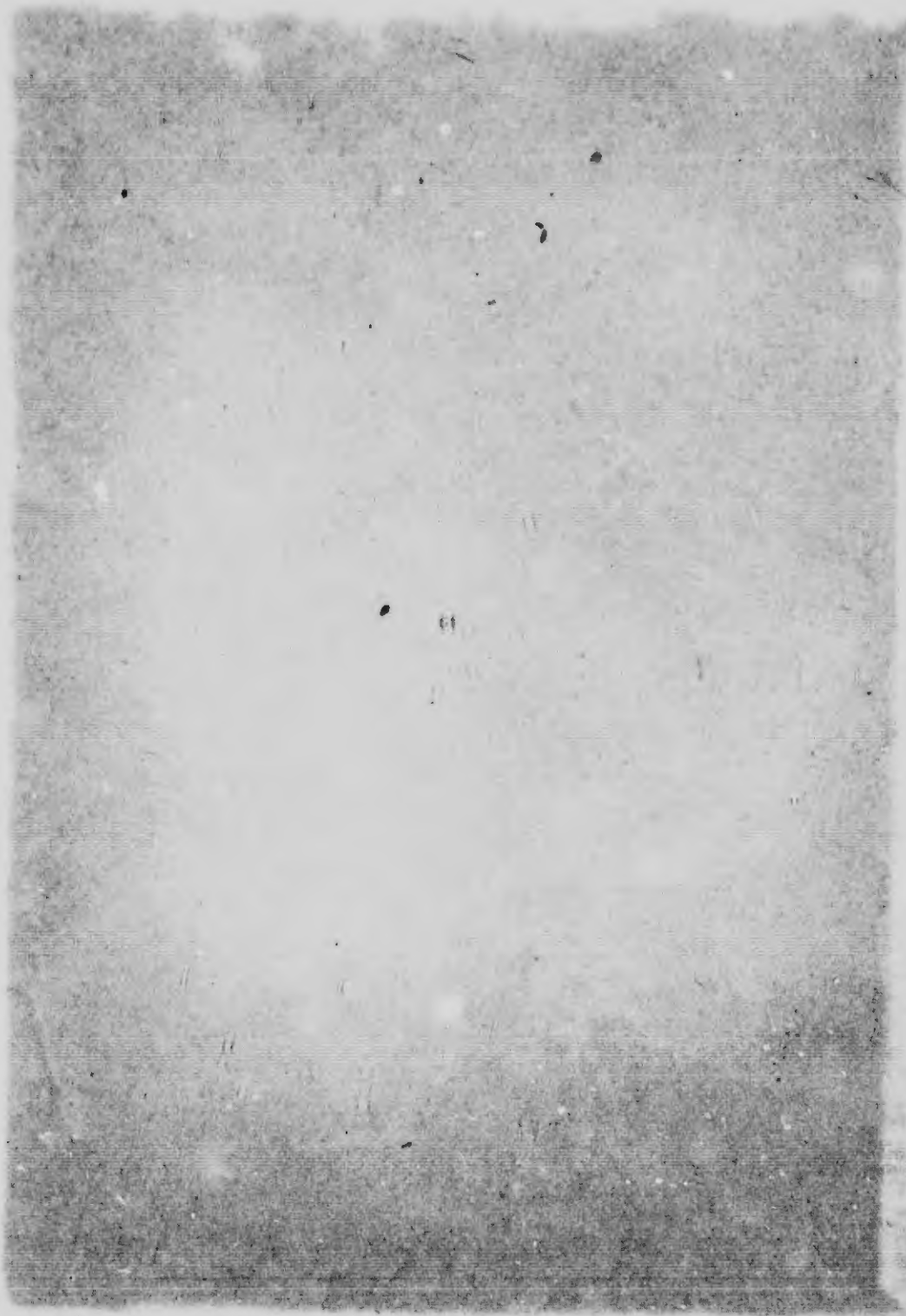
THE HEN-PECKED MAN

instances of the haughty, the proud, the frolic, the stubborn, who are each of them in secret downright slaves to their wives or mistresses. I must beg of you in the last place to dwell upon this, that the wise and valiant in all ages have been hen-pecked ; and that the sturdy tempers who are not slaves to affection, owe that exemption to their being enthralled by ambition, avarice, or some meaner passion. I have ten thousand thousand things more to say, but my wife sees me writing, and will, according to custom, be consulted if I do not seal this immediately.

“ Yours, NATHANIEL HENROOST.”

T.





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